

**and all those pieces come back together again -- by
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Summary:

Sometimes Hopper thinks he's adopted Eleven because he's trying to mend the cracks he's left behind in his wake.

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Author's Note:

I have incredible feels for Hopper and this show. It's been quite a while since I have written anything remotely fanfic-related. All feedback is appreciated, especially concrit.

I hope to write more, but if not -- enjoy this little foray into perfectly redundant, introspective gen.

Sometimes Hopper thinks he's adopted Eleven - Jane is still too weird, too *normal* - because he's trying to mend the cracks he's left behind in his wake. But that in itself, he realises, is an exercise in futility: as much as a black hole can't be stopped, a crack can't be fixed. You can try to hide it, pretending it's not there, but sooner or later everything will come tumbling down, and then there's nothing left but splinters of broken glass.

As he stares at a bit of sunlight coming through the nearly fully covered window in his grandfather's cabin, he wonders just how often he's tried to rebuild himself, and exactly how often he's failed. There was his disastrous attempt at saving his marriage, then there was throwing himself into work and now there's *this* .

This being just sitting here at his grandfather's chair, beside his grandfather's table, waiting for a thirteen-year-old girl to wake up and join him in this very poor imitation of what's called family. He snorts at the thought of that word: family means intimacy, family means trust and family means commitment - things that all of his ex-flings would tell him he sucks at.

And yet, Hopper can't help but think that, in some way, he and Eleven are just that: a unit of two very lonely people bound together by those very traits. He just has to close his eyes - and he does so, taking a deep breath because it's still too raw - of Eleven in his arms, exhausted by the battle as the elevator stood still and the world

around them exploded in colours of orange and red. He can still remember her tremble ever so slightly, her heavy breathing as she tried to regain composure while he himself tried to talk himself into believing that everything was going to be alright.

Maybe, he was lying to himself, but Hopper, for once, just wants to believe that miracles are possible. He's not a half bad Dad; he knows that Sarah adored him, and he wants to do the same for Eleven now - be there for her and protect her from any further harm. No, he can't give her back her childhood, but he can, at least, give her some semblance of a normal life - and she, in turn, can maybe give him a chance to feel part of something again.

Something he thought he'd lost forever when Sarah died.

It might be selfish, but that is what family is about as well- making sure that all the pieces that seem broken and lost fit together in a way that makes sense.
